



July 1, 2015

The Honorable Kevin Wolff
Chair, Alamo Area MPO
101 W. Nueva, Suite 1007, 10th floor
San Antonio, TX 78205

Dear Commissioner Wolff:

As you are aware, the 84th Legislature made a huge commitment to prioritize funding for transportation projects across the state. In addition to ending \$1.3 billion in diversions from the gas tax fund, we passed a constitutional amendment that, if approved by voters in November, will allocate \$2.5 billion annually in motor vehicle sales tax to transportation projects throughout the state.

Including Proposition 1 dollars approved by voters in 2014, the State Legislature has increased transportation funding by roughly \$5 billion a year over the past two sessions. We have done our part to represent the interests of Bexar County residents and secure additional funding for non-tolled highway projects. As a result, we request that the Alamo Area MPO amend the 825 plan to fund the expansion of U.S. 281 north of Loop 1604 without tolls.

Our insistence that the 281 expansion be completed using traditional funding mechanisms is based on a commitment made sixteen years ago by TxDOT. In 1999, the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approved an expansion plan for this section of U.S. 281 as part of the MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The plan called for using traditional funds to construct a series of overpasses at intersections along the corridor to alleviate congestion. As you know, this plan was abandoned when the Texas Transportation Commission passed a minute order on December 18, 2003, indicating all future road capacity built in the state of Texas would be tolled if proven viable.

Our opposition to the 825 plan stems from the fact that TxDOT's process was followed, and a funding plan was developed that all entities agreed to, and then TxDOT changed course, rescinding their support for the plan. The funding for this project was in place prior to the Commission's vote to rescind the deal in 2003 and put the expansion of U.S. 281 in limbo for over a decade.

The 84th Legislature has approved billions in new transportation dollars since the 825 plan was announced. Given the history of this project and the potential resources available for improvements, we believe it is in the best interest of the Alamo Area MPO, TxDOT, and taxpayers to amend the plan and utilize these funds to remove toll roads.

We have organized a series of meetings with TxDOT leadership, Speaker Straus, the Alamo Area MPO, and the Alamo RMA over the past six months to work out a non-toll solution for U.S. 281. With the potential to add \$200 million a year to improve San Antonio area roads and the surrounding counties, we remain committed to seeing U.S. 281 expanded from Loop 1604 to the county line without tolls.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Donna Campbell, M.D.
State Senator, District 25



Lyle Larson
State Representative, District 122

CC: Texas Transportation Commission
Lt. General Joe Weber, TxDOT Executive Director
John Clamp, Alamo RMA
Honorable Nelson Wolff, Bexar County